

brotherhood (or the lack thereof)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/52128679>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	One Piece (Anime & Manga)
Relationship:	Donquixote Doflamingo & Donquixote "Corazon" Rosinante
Character:	Donquixote Doflamingo
Additional Tags:	Canon Compliant , Character Study , Dressrosa Arc Spoilers
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-12-09 Words: 1,950 Chapters: 1/1

brotherhood (or the lack thereof)

by [archivistes](#)

Summary

Donquixote Doflamingo is two years old when Donquixote Rosinante is born, not that he really remembers it.

Or: Doflamingo, on what it means to be a brother.

Notes

CWs: everything that comes with Doflamingo (re: abuse of power, implied starvation + gross food + brief emeto, patricide, fratricide, implied alcoholism). These aren't written too explicitly or anything, but it's always better to mention it than to leave anything out!

This was my part of a fic exchange I did with a friend!! Their prompt for me was "brotherhood." I'm not the most proud of it, since my writing here was honestly pretty experimental and not really my usual style. So if you think this sucks, I'll say it's because of that LMAOOO. Doffy's a really fun character to write, though, so I hope you enjoy my small chara study xx

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Donquixote Doflamingo is two years old when Donquixote Rosinante is born, not that he really remembers it.

He peers up at the writhing, sobbing thing in his mother's arms with a vague sense of disgust. What is it? Doflamingo thinks, more in concept than in words. Did he look like that once? It's wet and gross. Stop holding it, Mama. I'm right here, I'm more than enough. Get rid of it.

"Oh, Doffy."

Doflamingo raises his head at his name. His mother smiles slowly, loving and tired. She pats the bed, encouraging Doflamingo to sit beside her. He reluctantly does so, and she bends down to press a kiss against Doflamingo's forehead. His nose scrunches up.

The baby continues to squirm, and his mother gives a small laugh, holding it up higher along her chest. "Say hi to your little brother, Doffy," she murmurs, and Doflamingo forces himself to look at the thing.

The thing his mother is holding—his *brother*—still has tears streaking down his face, and he's all so helpless that Doflamingo starts to feel a stroke of sympathy. The inkling of superiority.

"...Hi," Doflamingo eventually says, after processing his mother's words. His brother's face twists and he lets out a cry. Doflamingo startles; he tries to put his hand over his brother's mouth, maybe to comfort him, maybe to shut him up.

His mother laughs and gently puts Doflamingo's hand aside to cradle Rosinante closer. "Don't cry, Rosinante," she soothes, stroking his cheek.

"Your brother's here to protect you from here on out."

Rosinante is clumsy, and he cries when he trips, and he follows Doflamingo around like he can't do anything by himself, and he is still Doflamingo's little brother.

It doesn't make sense. At four years old, Doflamingo already understood the gratification of power. He understood the holiness in his veins was a blessing so few else could ever, would ever have. At four years old, Doflamingo already knew he was better than others. He was *chosen*.

The other children around him understand it, too. It is an understanding written into the very blood of the Celestial Dragons.

But Rosinante doesn't understand. At four years old, Rosinante is unbearably kind. He cowers and shakes his head when maggots bow to him and tries to make them stand up.

They look alike, and they play together, and they live under the same sculpted roof, but his brother just doesn't understand the world at all.

It's laughably sad of Rosinante, Doflamingo thinks, but it's okay. Rosinante is still of his blood, so he's worth salvaging. That's what it means to be a brother, after all.

At eight years old, his stupid, asinine, fool of a father decides to give up their name as Celestial Dragons.

It's never the same after that. With their status stripped, no one fears Doflamingo anymore. No one listens. No one obeys. His words mean nothing, his status means nothing, his *blood* means nothing.

For once in his life, Doflamingo feels *weak*. It's unnatural, unsettling. A concept that should never apply to him. He may be young, but there must be a way to bring himself back to the land of the Celestial Dragons.

"It's not fair, Rosi," Doflamingo hisses, sitting atop the dining table as he watches his brother do the dishes. "You shouldn't be doing these things. You're *above* these things! Why aren't you more angry? It's all Father's fault! Listen, Rosi, if we bring his head back to Marijoa, do you think—"

Porcelain shatters in the sink. Silence engulfs them. Doflamingo's gaze narrows, and Rosinante's hands still.

"...S-Sorry," Rosinante says quietly, and he looks at Doflamingo with a sheepish glance. "My hands...slipped..."

Of course. Rosinante's only become more and more clumsy over the years. Doflamingo sighs exaggeratedly and hops down from the dining table, walking over and peering into the sink to inspect the damage.

"See?" Doflamingo laughs, a question that demands no response. Rosinante never talks back, anyway. He admires him too much. "*This* is why you shouldn't be doing things like this," Doflamingo says, shaking his head. "This is why we need servants again! You're too useless at housekeeping! Just consider what I said, Rosi. You know I've only got your best interests in mind."

Rosinante offers him a timid smile and washes away the cuts on his hands.

One month later, the locals burn down their mansion. They all find refuge in a junkpile.

("You've got to eat, Rosi," Doflamingo says fiercely, holding the rotting food to Rosinante's mouth. His brother shakes his head desperately.

"I don't wanna," Rosinante wails, gripping Doflamingo's shoulders. "I—I don't wanna—we gotta—w-we need to bring it back to—"

Doflamingo forces the food into Rosinante's mouth and keeps his mouth shut.

"Eat, Rosinante," Doflamingo grits, even as Rosinante retches everything out. "Mama said I've gotta look after you, so that's what I'm gonna do.")

One year later, his mother dies from illness.

(Doflamingo stares down at his still mother, and the tears on his face feel warm and empty. "This is what the humans did to us, Rosi," he says, hollow.

Rosinante chokes back on a sob. "W-We're humans, too, Doffy—"

Doflamingo feels a surge of anger boil in his chest. He whips his head around and grips Rosinante's face firmly between his hands. "We're not such low beings, Rosinante," he snarls. "You understand me? Father abandoned it, but we never did. You and I are still gods, Rosinante, and I'll make sure we can go back to where we belong.")

Two years later, Doflamingo, Rosinante, and their father are nearly burned alive.

Heaving, scarred, and bloodied, a ten-year-old Doflamingo raises a gun and shoots his weak-willed father in the back of his head, all for Rosinante to see. *This* is what it means to have the strength to live, and it's time his brother learns.

Sobbing, Rosinante runs off, and Doflamingo lets him. He'll be back, after all; this is just a tantrum. Rosinante has never been able to do anything without his brother.

Weeks pass, and Rosinante never comes back.

The Celestial Dragons never take him back, but the men who take him in revere him. He eats a Devil Fruit that rebirths him as a rightful puppeteer, the one who leads lesser beings on strings.

Years pass, and almost everything is as it should be again.

“You’re never gonna believe this, Doffy,” Diamante cackles, and Doflamingo briefly grimaces at the grating intensity of his voice over the Den Den Mushi.

“I won’t believe what?” Doflamingo sighs exasperatedly, if only to indulge his officer.

“We were going through the files of those pests we exterminated, right, and get this! They had a lotta captives, but one of the names on there said ‘Donquixote Rosinante.’”

Doflamingo sits up. “What?” he asks slowly, and the room itself trembles with tension.

Diamante continues. *“Of course, we remembered you mentioning you had a brother once in the past, so we grabbed the guy. We’ll need you to affirm it’s him and everything, Boss, but we’ve got the guy right he—”*

“I’m coming,” Doflamingo interrupts, abruptly standing and whisking on his coat, shoving through the door.

When he arrives, he nods at Trebol and Diamante curtly before pushing past the two and coming to a stop.

There’s no doubt about it, Doflamingo thinks, grateful for the sunglasses that cover his wide eyes. Fourteen years later, his little brother has finally come crawling back to him.

He storms over and swallows Rosinante up into a hug, causing him to stumble back at the force of it.

“You won’t leave again,” Doflamingo commands, clawing his fingers into the back of his brother’s shirt.

Rosinante silently nods against Doflamingo’s shoulder. The movement is so stilted, it’s as though Doflamingo’s strings themselves are telling him to.

Rosinante has always been a quiet thing, but it’s different this time. Now his brother *can’t* speak rather than *doesn’t feel like* speaking.

But it's fine. Doflamingo has always been the leader, the one with the things worth saying; and Rosinante has always been the follower, the dutiful listener.

That's what it means to be brothers.

(Doflamingo carefully rolls the cork between his fingers, thoughtful. He takes a swig from the wine bottle and then slams it against the desk. The line on the other side of the Den Den Mushi goes silent.

"Are you suggesting my brother has not, in fact, been a captive these past fourteen years?" Doflamingo asks slowly, in a manner that implies he wants no response. He wipes at his mouth. "You think he's here to try and take *me* down?"

The pause goes on for a long time. "...*It could be a Marine plant, Sir, is all I'm advising.*"

Doflamingo laughs, then, abrasive and loud. "Your concern is fine, Vergo, but there's no need to be worried. Even if Rosinante *is* here on the supposed behalf of the Marines, it means nothing in the end."

There's the sound of shuffling. "*Sir?*"

"At the end of the day, my little brother can't do anything against me. He's looked up to me all his life—whether it's been out of fear or out of love doesn't matter. It just means he's too weak to deny me anything."

Doflamingo quiets for a moment, taking another sip. Then he grins again.

"After all, Vergo, when I get my hands on that Devil Fruit—"

Doflamingo empties the bottle and sets it next to the other one. He thinks of a time long ago, and his burn scars ache.

Doffy, help me! a child pleads in his memories.

"He's going to be the one who dies for me.")

One year later, the Donquixote Family welcomes in a boy named Trafalgar Law.

Two years after that, Rosinante and Law go missing.

Doflamingo keeps drinking, and the burning ache turns dull.

“Navy Code 01746, Naval HQ Commander Rosinante. Doflamingo, Captain of the Donquixote Family...I infiltrated your group...in order to prevent the atrocities you had planned.”

There’s blood rushing in his ears.

Doflamingo stares down at Rosinante with an unmoving expression. His fingers twitch, once. Rosinante doesn’t move the gun away.

Is this really it? he thinks. This is what it comes down to. You are truly our father’s son, Rosinante—a traitor.

“I’m sorry for lying,” his brother is saying weakly. “I just...didn’t want you to hate me...”

Why? For some reason, Doflamingo’s heart feels nothing. His movement feels cold when he pulls the gun he used over a decade ago and levels it at Rosinante’s chest.

He’s being betrayed, again. Betrayed by his useless, clumsy brother.

His useless, clumsy brother who trips over his feet and used to cling to Doflamingo’s shirt and the one Doflamingo wasted *years* of his life *salvaging*, because that *was his brother*.

(“Your brother’s here to protect you from here on out,” their mother had once so sweetly said.)

It’s such a joke.

Doflamingo pulls the trigger, and finally rids the world of his pathetic father’s pathetic son. That’s what it means to be brothers—to be the last one standing.

The mighty Fleet Admiral Sengoku can never quite look Doflamingo in the eyes during Warlord meetings.

It’s not like every other Marine he encounters—they look away from him because he unnerves them, because they fear him.

It’s different with Sengoku. Doflamingo grins, because he knows there’s sadness behind the Fleet Admiral’s eyes.

All good things must come to an end.

Monkey D. Luffy comes to save Trafalgar Law's pathetic excuse for a life, and in the moment Luffy's leg strikes against Doflamingo's own, Doflamingo briefly thinks:

Oh. Maybe this is what it means to be a brother.

Brotherhood is unconditional.

End Notes

We never learned how exactly Cora infiltrated the Donquixote pirates so I took liberties on that; I firmly believe something like "just coincidence" wouldn't work with someone as intelligent as DoFlamingo, in this I was just implying the Marines set up a fake situation to get him in. Who knows how it actually went. Not me. Anyway. Thank you for reading! <3

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!